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FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS PART TWO

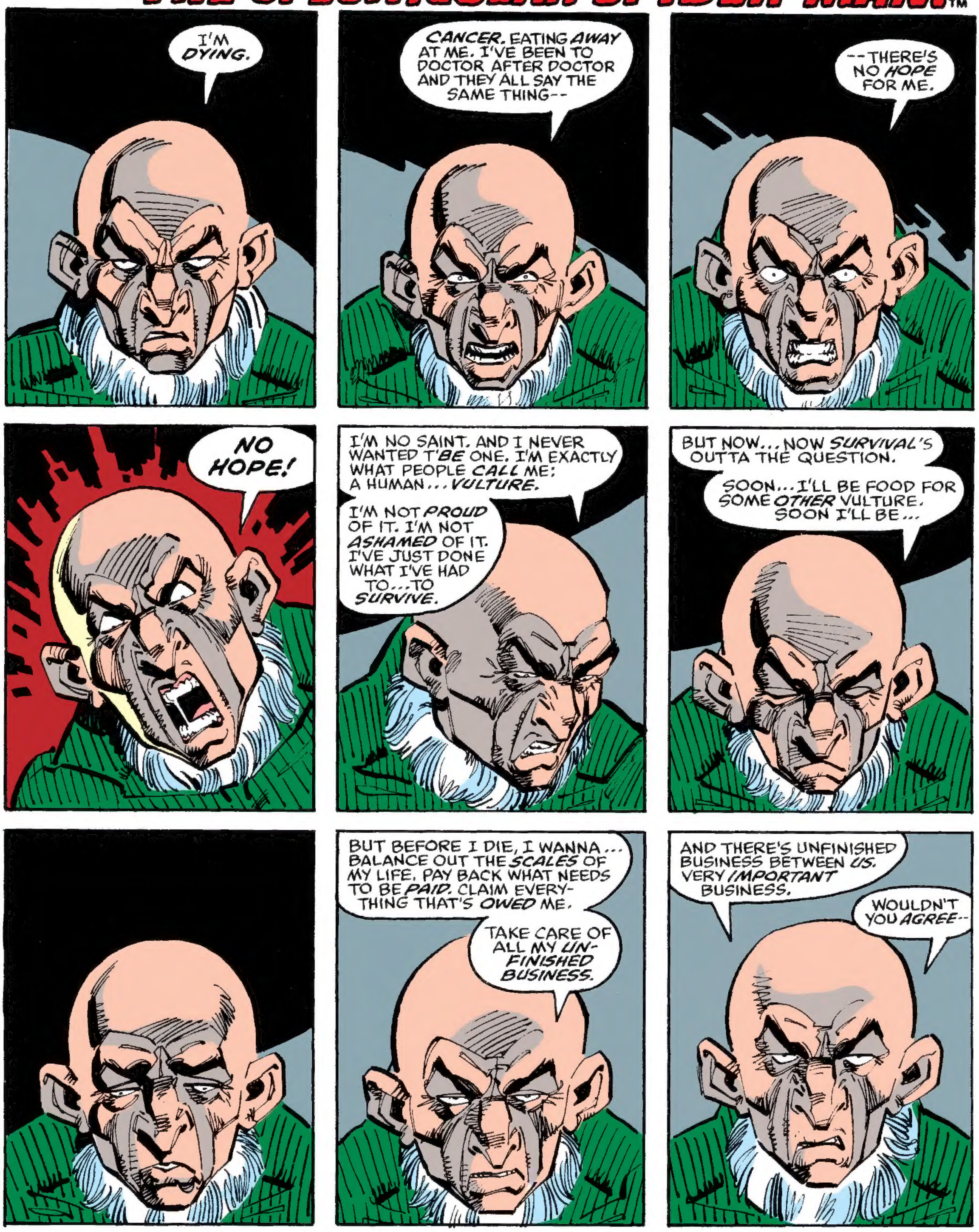
the SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN™

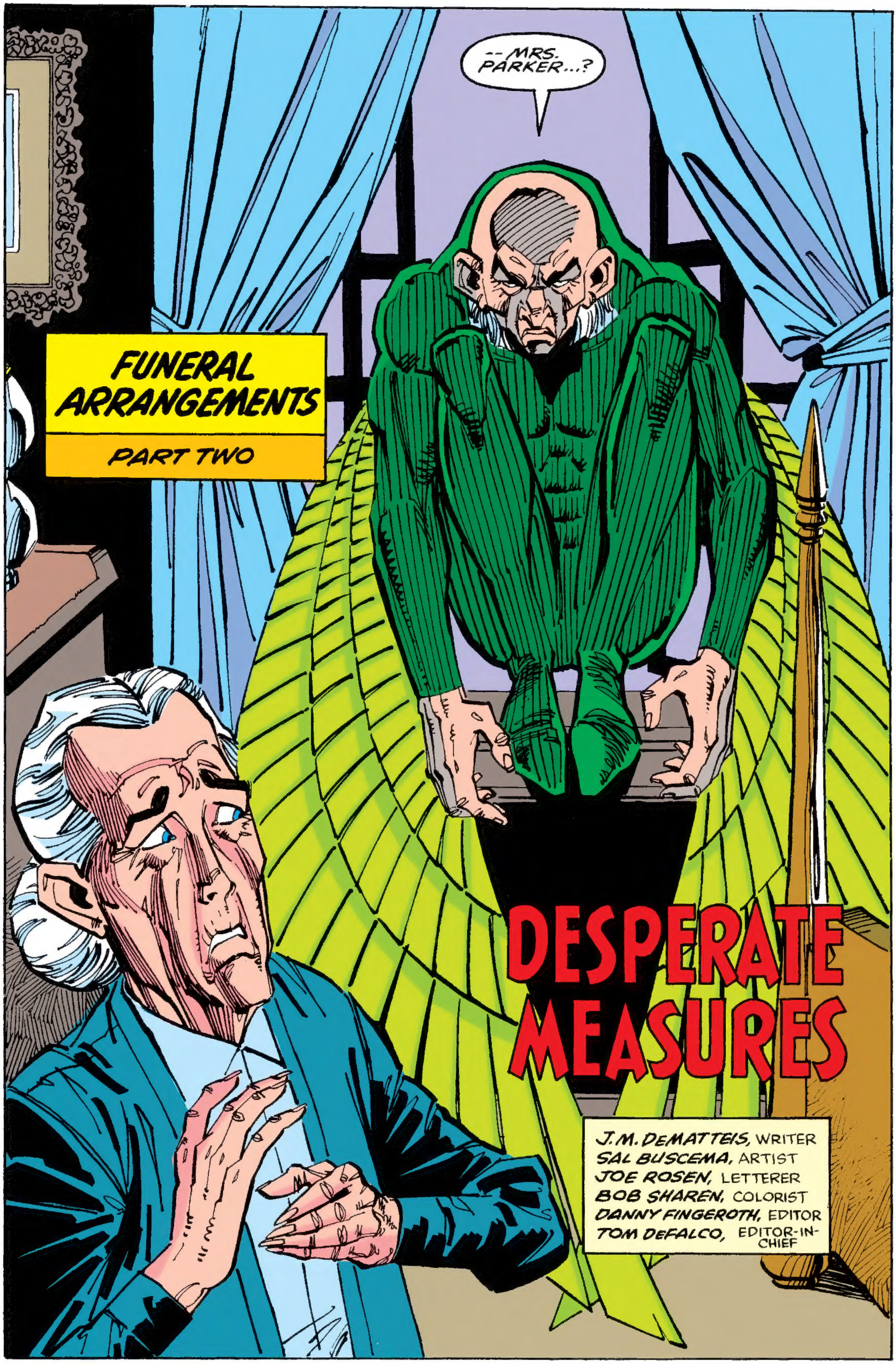
THE VULTURE'S™ NEXT VICTIM: AUNT MAY!™

Joe Bruno

BITTEN BY A RADIOACTIVE SPIDER, STUDENT **PETER PARKER** GAINED THE PROPORTIONATE STRENGTH AND AGILITY OF AN ARACHNID! ARMED WITH HIS WONDROUS WEB-SHOOTERS, THE RELUCTANT SUPER HERO STRUGGLES WITH SINISTER SUPER-VILLAINS, MAKING ENDS MEET, AND MAINTAINING SOME SEMBLANCE OF A NORMAL LIFE!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN!™


I'M DYING.
CANCER. EATING AWAY AT ME. I'VE BEEN TO DOCTOR AFTER DOCTOR AND THEY ALL SAY THE SAME THING--
--THERE'S NO HOPE FOR ME.
NO HOPE!
I'M NO SAINT. AND I NEVER WANTED T'BE ONE. I'M EXACTLY WHAT PEOPLE CALL ME: A HUMAN... VULTURE.
I'M NOT PROUD OF IT. I'M NOT ASHAMED OF IT. I'VE JUST DONE WHAT I'VE HAD TO...TO SURVIVE.
BUT NOW... NOW SURVIVAL'S OUTTA THE QUESTION.
SOON... I'LL BE FOOD FOR SOME OTHER VULTURE. SOON I'LL BE...
BUT BEFORE I DIE, I WANNA... BALANCE OUT THE SCALES OF MY LIFE. PAY BACK WHAT NEEDS TO BE PAID. CLAIM EVERY-THING THAT'S OWED ME.
TAKE CARE OF ALL MY UN-FINISHED BUSINESS.
AND THERE'S UNFINISHED BUSINESS BETWEEN US. VERY IMPORTANT BUSINESS.
WOULDN'T YOU AGREE--



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YOU AND I HAVE NO *BUSINESS.* YOU'RE A COMMON *CRIMINAL.* A *MURDERER.*

YOU KILLED MY NATHAN!

EXACTLY, MRS. PARKER. *I'M* RESPONSIBLE FOR NATHAN LUBENSKY'S DEATH*--

*IT HAPPENED IN *AMAZING SPIDER-MAN* #336. --DANNY

--AND I AM SO--

--SORRY.

WHEN I MET NATHAN AT THE HOSPITAL...I'D JUST ABOUT GIVEN *UP* ON LIFE.* I WAS A TIRED OLD MAN WITH NO HOPE. COULD'VE JUST LAID DOWN AND *DIED.*

BUT NATHAN... HE *TALKED* T'ME...*TOUCHED* SOMETHING IN ME THAT--

*IN AMAZING #224.--DANNY

WELL, I FOUND THE STRENGTH TO GO ON LIVING. GO ON *FIGHT-ING.*

I COUNTED NATHAN AS MY *FRIEND,* MRS. PARKER. AND A MAN LIKE ME DOESN'T HAVE VERY MANY FRIENDS.

HIS DEATH--IT WAS AN *ACCIDENT!* I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW IT WAS *HIM* TILL I READ ABOUT IT IN THE PAPERS. IT JUST ABOUT BROKE MY HEART!

WHAT DO YOU *WANT?*

I...I CAN'T FACE MY *END* WITH THIS EATING AWAY AT ME... TEARING ME *APART!*

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

YOUR *FORGIVENESS,* MRS. PARKER.

YOUR *FORGIVENESS.*

SMAK!

GET OUT OF MY HOUSE-- GET OUT OF HERE!

AND DON'T YOU EVER--

--EVER--

-- COME BACK!!

...HOW CAN YOU START DOING *BILLS* AT ELEVEN O'CLOCK AT NIGHT?

YOU'VE GOT A SIX A.M. *CALL* TOMORROW!

IF I DON'T DO IT TONIGHT, IT'LL *NEVER* GET DONE.

HEY-- WHAT'S THE PROBLEM? *I* CAN TAKE CARE OF IT.

YOU? OH, *COME* NOW.

THAT'S IT, ***MARY JANE***. KEEP SMILING. KEEP THE BANTER LIGHT AND BREEZY. DON'T LET HIM KNOW HOW ***WORRIED*** YOU ARE.

HARRY'S OUT THERE. ***THE GREEN GOBLIN.*** TICKING AWAY LIKE A ***TIME-BOMB***...

PETER PARKER, EVERY TIME YOU'VE TRIED TO BALANCE OUR CHECKBOOK, I'VE HAD TO SPEND ***WEEKS*** UNDOING THE DAMAGE!

I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU *EVER* GOT ALONG *WITHOUT* ME.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION, I MANAGED JUST *FINE*.

...JUST WAITING TO *EXPLODE*.

DON'T GET ***DEFENSIVE***, SWEETIE. I CAN'T SPIN WEBS OR TAKE A DE-CENT PHOTOGRAPH-- BUT YOU DON'T HEAR *ME* COMPLAINING.

NOW YOU JUST STICK TO WHAT *YOU* DO BEST--AND LEAVE THE FAMILY FINANCES TO *ME*.

MY GOD--SHE'S BEAUTIFUL, SHE'S SEXY, SHE'S A GREAT ACTRESS, ***AND*** SHE CAN BALANCE A CHECKBOOK!

I'M MARRIED TO THE ***PERFECT WOMAN!***

HOLD IT, DON JUAN--

--IF I GET DISTRACTED ***NOW***, WE'RE LIKELY TO END UP IN ***DEBTOR'S PRISON***.

PETER'S WORRIED, TOO, I ***KNOW*** IT. WORRIED ABOUT ME AND MAY... AND WHAT COULD HAPPEN IF HARRY STRIKES AT ***US*** TO GET BACK AT ***HIM***.

NOW DON'T BE ***SAD***. IF YOU'RE A GOOD LITTLE BOY, MOMMY WILL GIVE YOU A ***BIIIIG*** SURPRISE WHEN SHE'S ALL DONE WITH THE BILLS.

HOW BIG?

VERY BIG.

THAT'S WHY I'VE GOT TO KEEP UP A GOOD FRONT. HE CAN'T--

RINNNG RINNNG RINNNG

WELL...ARE YOU GONNA ***ANSWER*** IT--OR ARE YOU JUST GOING TO SIT THERE ***POUTING*** ALL NIGHT?

I'VE ***GOT*** IT, I'VE ***GOT*** IT.

PETER PARKER, NEW YORK'S FRUSTRATED PHOTOGRAPHER, AT YOUR SERV!--

AUNT MAY?

AUNT MAY, SLOW *DOWN*... I CAN'T UNDERSTA--

OH, NO.

WHAT?!

OH, NO!

NO... *NO*... YOU JUST *STAY* THERE! I'M COMING RIGHT *OVER!*

IT NEVER *ENDS*--

--*DOES* IT?!

WHAT IS IT, HON? WHAT'S *WRONG?*

RRAK-KK

WHY AM I PRETENDING? I KNOW WHAT IT IS.

IT'S *AUNT MAY!* HE... HE CAME TO HER *HOUSE* TONIGHT!

TO HER *HOUSE!!*

OH, GOD, I HOPE SHE'S NOT HURT! PLEASE DON'T LET HER BE HURT!

WHO, PETER?

WHO CAME TO HER HOUSE?!

MAYBE I'M WRONG. MAYBE IT'S NOT HARRY. MAY'S HIGH STRUNG. SHE GETS PANICKED OVER LITTLE THINGS SOMETIMES. MAYBE IT'S JUST--

THE *VULTURE.*

THE VULTURE?

GIVE ME A MINUTE TO GET DRESSED. I'M COMING *WITH* YOU--

THE VULTURE?!

NO--

--YOU'LL ONLY SLOW ME *DOWN!*

WHAT'S *HAPPEN-ING* TO US?

HARRY OUT THERE... HOVERING LIKE A GHOST. *RICHARD FISK*... TURNING OUR LIVES INSIDE OUT.* AND NOW *THIS!*

*SEE RECENT ISSUES OF *WEB OF SPIDER-MAN.* --DANNY

THE VULTURE!

THAT'S WHAT HE WAS DOING IN QUEENS TO-NIGHT.*HE WAS JUST WAITING FOR HIS CHANCE --TO GET AT *AUNT MAY!*

BUT, WHY?

*LAST ISSUE. --DANNY

IT'S THE GOBLIN--IT'S *GOT* TO BE! *HE* PUT THE VULTURE UP TO THIS! MAY-BE HAD A LITTLE *AUCTION*-- SOLD OFF SPIDER-MAN'S IDENTITY TO THE HIGHEST *BIDDER*--!

I'VE BEEN WORRIED *SICK* THESE PAST WEEKS...AFRAID THAT SOME-THING LIKE THIS WAS GOING TO *HAPPEN. M.J, TOO.* SHE KEEPS UP THAT CHEERFUL FRONT--BUT I KNOW HOW *UPSET* SHE'S BEEN.

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO US?!

IT'S LIKE ALL THE EVIL I'VE STRUGGLED SO HARD TO KEEP *OUT THERE... AWAY* FROM THE PEOPLE I LOVE... HAS GAINED SOME KIND OF AWFUL *MOMENTUM.*

LIKE THE *WALL* BETWEEN SPIDER-MAN AND PETER PARKER...

...HAS COME CRASHING DOWN.

KR-ASH!

EVENING, JAMESON.

GET OUT OF HERE-- BEFORE I CALL THE POLICE.

DAILY BUGLE

I THINK NOT.

DIDN'T YOU *HEAR* ME, VULTURE, I SAID--

LOSE THE MACHO *POSTURING.* I HAVEN'T GOT THE *TIME.*

I *TERRIFY* YOU, JAMESON. *YOU* KNOW IT. *I* KNOW IT. AND THAT'S NOTHING T'BE *ASHAMED* OF.

BECAUSE I'M A VERY *NASTY* PIECE O' WORK--

--AND I'D *KILL* YOU IN A *SECOND.*

DROP DEAD.

DROP?
DEAD?
GOOD IDEA.
NOOOOOO!!
DON'T KILL ME! DON'T KILL ME!
THAT'S BETTER. GOOD, HEALTHY FEAR.
WH-WHADDAYOU WANT? ANYTHING! ANYTHING!
THE HEADLINE OF TOMORROW'S BUGLE, A... PROCLAMATION. FOR THE WORLD.
I WANT YOU TO ANNOUNCE MY INTENTION TO KILL SPIDER-MAN.
N-NO PROBLEM ... IF THERE'S ANY-THING I CAN DO T'HELP... L-LET ME KNOW!
YOU DON'T QUITE UNDERSTAND, JAMESON.
HEY, YOU-- PUT THAT MAN DOWN!
YEAH-- DROP 'IM!
NO... DON'T DROP ME! DON'T DROP ME!
HE'S ALL YOURS, GENTS!
BUT, JAMESON, GET THIS STRAIGHT: THIS ISN'T A THREAT. IT ISN'T A GAME. SPIDER-MAN IS GOING TO DIE... VERY PUBLICLY, VERY BRUTALLY... BY MY HAND.
MORE THAN ANYONE IN MY LIFE... HE OWES ME. AND HE'S GOING TO PAY.
FOR THE YEARS OF HUMILIATION. FOR ALL THE PAIN. THE SCALES ARE GONNA BE BALANCED. HE'S GOING TO PAY.
AND, IF YOU EVEN THINK OF CROSSING ME--
--SO WILL YOU.
WELL-- DON'T JUST LAY THERE LIKE A COUPLE OF QUIVERING LUMPS OF JELLO--
--HELP ME UP!!

AUNT MAY...?

AUNT MAY!

IN HERE, PETER.

AUNT MAY... I WAS SO *WORRIED!* I... I GOT HERE AS SOON AS I *COULD!* OH, GOD, I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'D DO IF ANYTHING EVER *HAPPENED* TO--

I'M... ALL RIGHT.

BUT YOU'RE *SHAKING.*

I'M *ALL RIGHT.* HE *FRIGHTENED* ME, THAT'S ALL.

WHAT DID HE WANT? DID HE SAY ANYTHING? DID HE--

HE SAID HE WANTED--

-- MY *FORGIVENESS.*

WHAT?!

HE SAID HE WAS SORRY FOR WHAT HE DID. FOR KILLING *NATHAN.*

NATHAN? THAT DIDN'T EVEN *OCCUR* TO ME! I THOUGHT HE WAS HERE BECAUSE OF--

BE-CAUSE OF *WHAT?*

NOTHING. GO ON.

HE SAID HE WAS DYING OF *CANCER.* AND HE WANTED ME TO *FORGIVE* HIM. AND DO YOU KNOW *WHAT,* PETER? FOR A SECOND THERE...

...I ALMOST *DID.*

BUT I THINK I'M TOO *OLD* TO FORGIVE ANY MORE. I'VE BEEN THROUGH *TOO MUCH.*

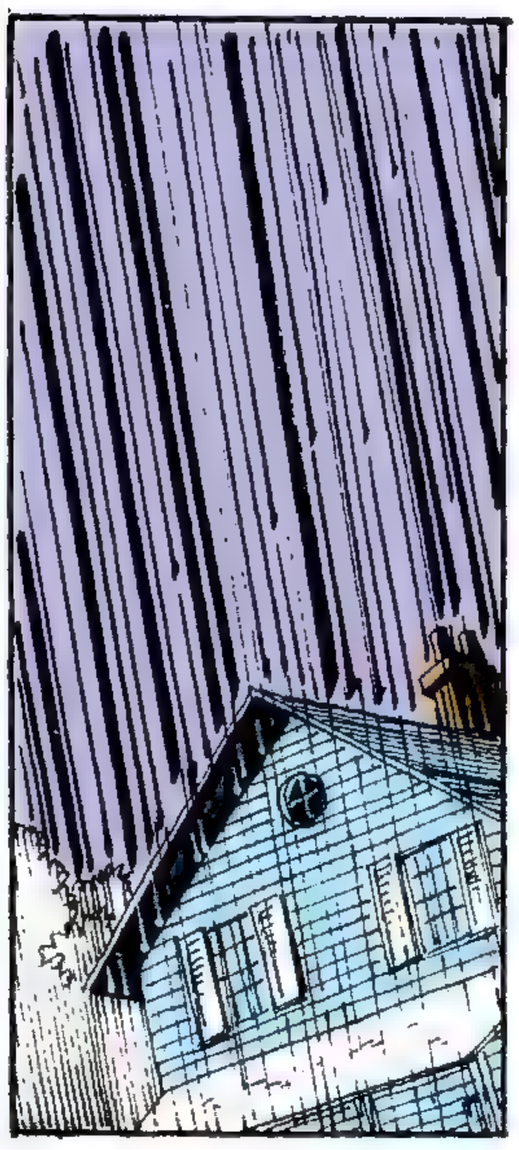
TOO MANY VULTURES CIRCLING AROUND ME... PECKING AWAY AT THE PEOPLE I LOVE.

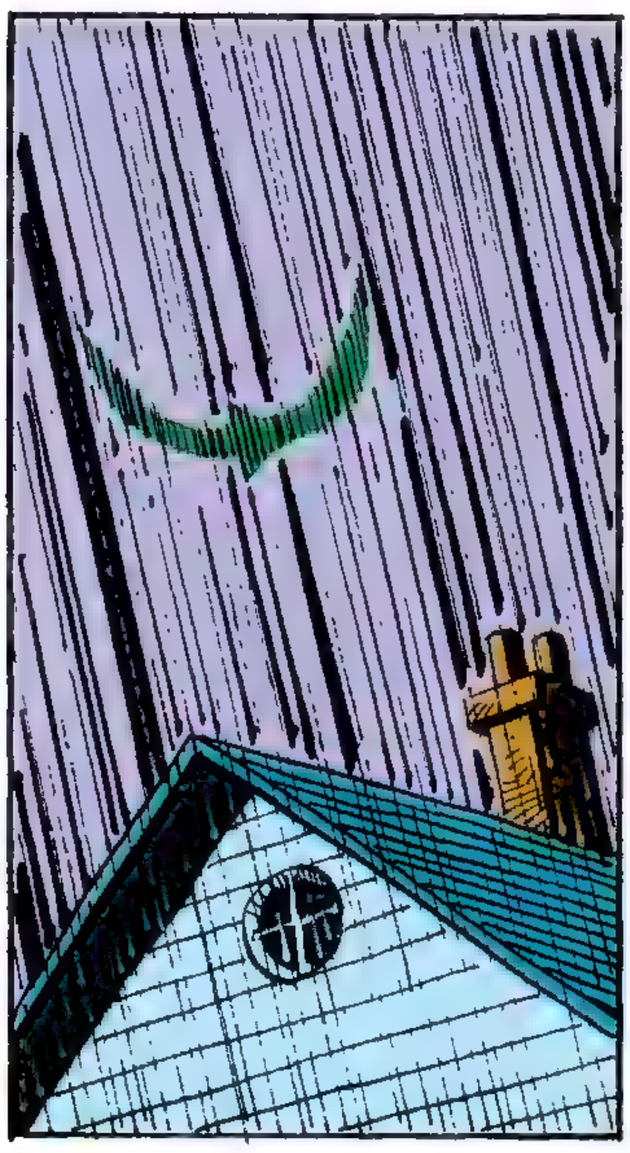
I THINK MY HEART IS *DEAD*, PETER. *COLD*. A PIECE OF IT DIED WITH YOUR MOTHER AND FATHER. ANOTHER WITH YOUR UNCLE BEN.

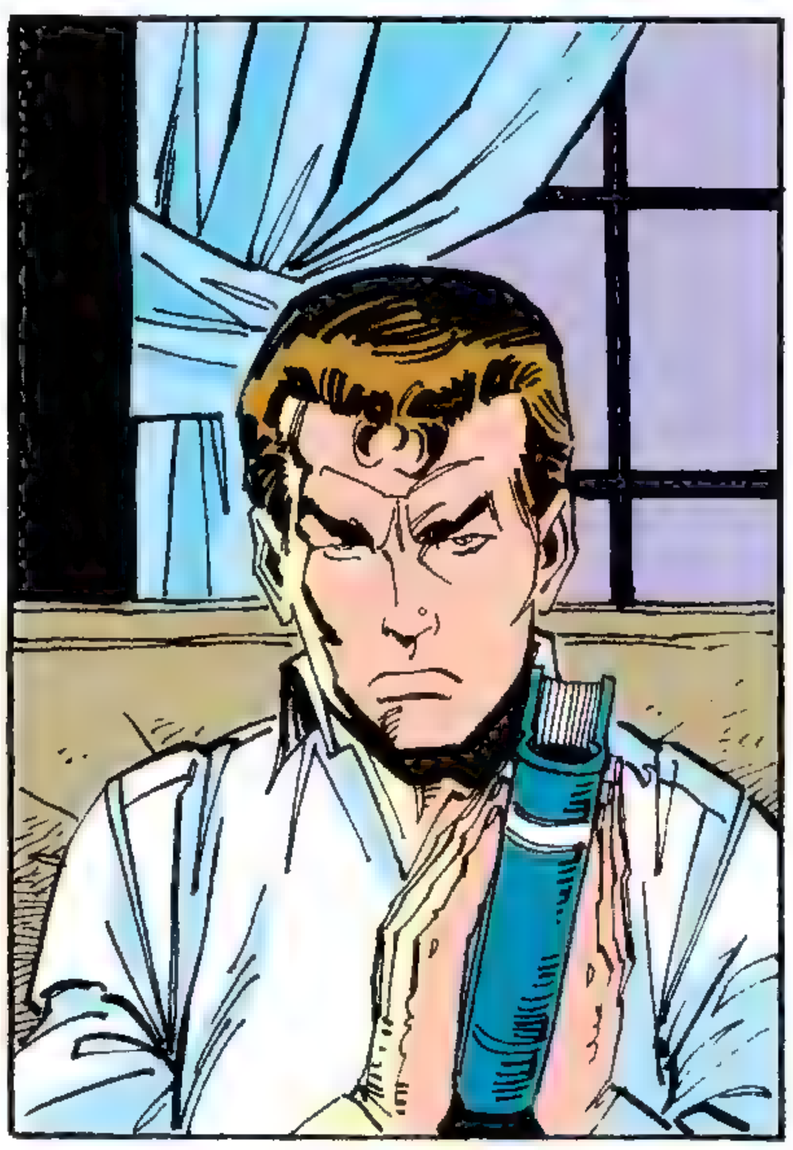
AND I THINK THE *FINAL* PIECE DIED... WITH NATHAN.

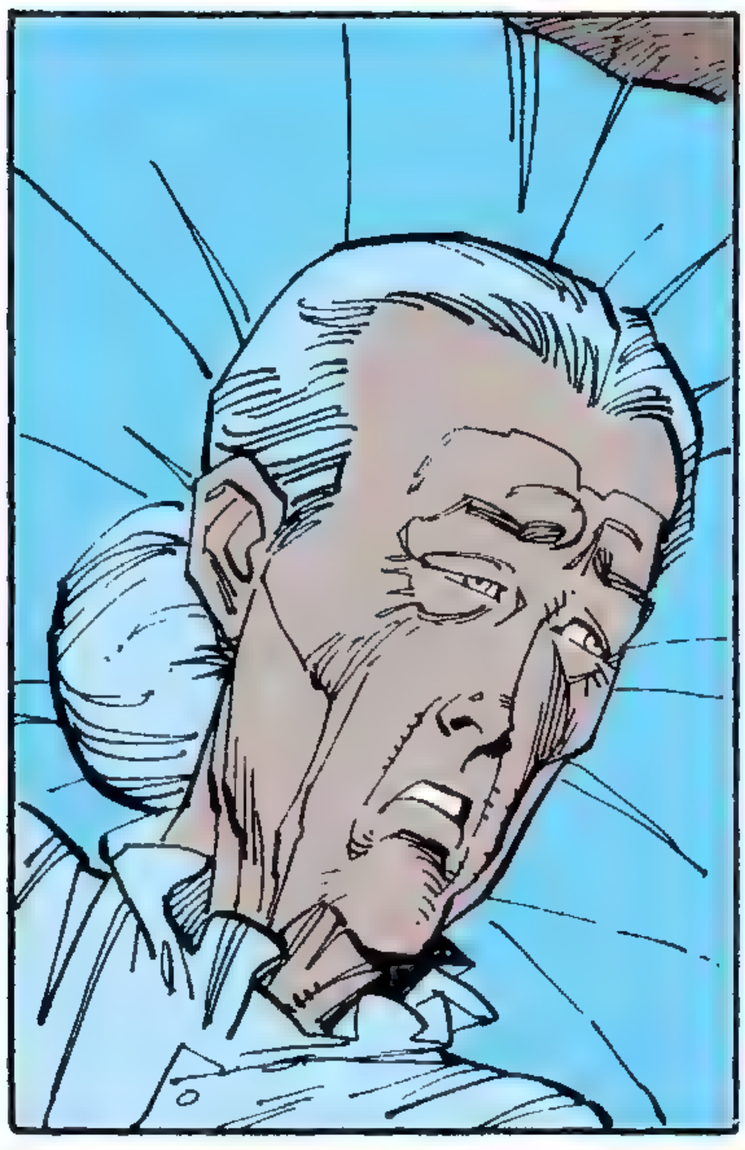
MAYBE *I* DIED WITH NATHAN, TOO... BUT I'VE JUST BEEN TOO STUPID TO *REALIZE* IT--

--TILL *NOW.*









AUNT MAY--??!!

PEEEE-TERRRR!!

AUNT MAY!

NO...NOT AGAIN! NOT LIKE UNCLE BEN!

NOT AGAIN!

AUNT MAY, ARE YOU--?

...HE...

HE WAS HERE.

BUT...WHEN HE HEARD YOU COMING... THE WINDOW ...HE--

HE'S GONE. HE MUST HAVE--

NOT GONE YET, PARKER.

JUST FLEW DOWN... CAME BACK IN THROUGH THE FRONT. WANTED T'CHECK THE PLACE OUT. SEE WHO ELSE WAS *HERE*.

SHOULD'VE DONE THAT IN THE *FIRST* PLACE. GUESS I'M JUST NOT *THINKING* STRAIGHT THESE DAYS.

GET THAT WORRIED *LOOK* OFF YOUR FACE, KID. I'M NOT HERE T'HURT YOU. LAST THING IN THE WORLD I WANNA DO IS BRING ANY *MORE* PAIN TO YOU OR YOUR AUNT.

YEAH, RIGHT. THAT'S WHY YOU'RE STANDING THERE WITH THAT *GUN* IN YOUR HAND!

PETER-- PLEASE--!

YEAH... PETER. CALM DOWN. THAT GUN WAS JUST A *PRE-CAUTIONARY* MEASURE, CAN'T BE TOO *CAREFUL* THESE DAYS.

BUT, HERE ...*THIS* MAKE YOU HAPPY? SIGN OF GOOD *FAITH*.

I *TOLD* YOU I DON'T WANNA *HURT* ANY-BODY.

BUT DO ME ONE FAVOR, KID-- DON'T TRY TO BE A *HERO*.

SAME THING THAT MAKES ME FLY MAKES ME AWFULLY *STRONG*.

THE VULTURE... *HERE*... IN MY AUNT'S HOUSE.

AND IF I END UP HURTING YOU *UNINTENTION-ALLY*... WELL--

NO MORE WALL... BE-TWEEN SPIDER-MAN AND PETER PARKER.

--THAT'S NOT GONNA MAKE *ANY* OF US HAPPY.

BUT THERE'S *GOT* TO BE A WALL--

THERE'S GOT TO BE!!

POW

"AND I WON'T HAVE YOU *VIOLATING* US LIKE THIS!"

YOU, HARRY, FISK... YOU'RE *ALL* VULTURES!

THIS IS MY AUNT... THIS IS THE HOUSE I GREW *UP* IN... AND YOU'RE SOILING IT... *ALL* OF YOU! SOILING EVERYTHING THAT'S SACRED TO ME--

--AND I WON'T HAVE IT!

I WON'T HAVE IT.

P-PETER... *HOW*--?

HE... HE JUST DIDN'T *EXPECT* IT. I'LL GO DOWN AND CHECK ON HIM. YOU CALL THE *POLICE.*

GOTTA GET A GRIP. STUNT LIKE THAT COULD'VE BLOWN MY DOUBLE ENTITY FOR *SURE.*

VULTURE DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING I SAID... AND AUNT MAY'S SO *SHAKEN*...BUT I CAN'T LET THIS SHAKE *ME.*

MORE THAN EVER ...I'VE GOT TO KEEP THAT WALL BETWEEN MY TWO LIVES *STRONG.* CAN'T LET ANYONE ELSE EVEN *SUSPECT* THAT--

UH-OH! THERE GOES MY *SPIDER-SENSE* AGAIN!

HE'S MAKING HIS MOVE...

...AND PETER PARKER'S GOTTA *LET* HIM!

LUCKY PUNCH, KID. LOOKS LIKE YOUR HEALTH CLUB MEMBERSHIP PAID OFF.

BUT YOUR LUCK'S GONNA RUN OUT... *FAST*...IF YOU TRY THAT AGAIN.

LISTEN TO ME, VULTURE--

NO...*YOU* LISTEN *TIME!* I DIDN'T COME HERE FOR A *FIGHT!* I CAME HERE BECAUSE--

LET HIM *GO.*

???
!!!

LET HIM *GO*--

--AND GET *OUT* OF MY *HOUSE.*

I'M SICK AND *TIRED* OF PEOPLE LIKE YOU... HURTING MY FAMILY... BREAKING OUR HEARTS... *OVER* AND *OVER*.

SICK... AND *TIRED*.

NOW LET MY NEPHEW *GO*--

--AND *GET OUT*.

I'VE REALLY *BOTCHED* IT, HAVEN'T *I*?

I CAME TO WASH AWAY THE PAIN OF THE PAST... AND WOUNDED YOU EVEN *MORE* IN THE BARGAIN. THIS HAS BEEN... A FOOL'S ERRAND FROM THE *START*. I SEE THAT NOW.

I'LL... DO WHAT YOU *ASK*. I'LL *GO*--AND I WON'T COME--

WEEOOOWEEOOOWEE

NO!!

WHY DID YOU HAVE TO *CALL* THEM?! *WHY*?!

DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND? I CAN'T BE STOPPED NOW! MY WORK ISN'T *DONE*! MY FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS AREN'T *COMPLETE*!

THERE'S STILL *SPIDER-MAN* TO BE TAKEN CARE OF!

I'M VERY SORRY, MRS. PARKER-- *VERY* SORRY--BUT, IN ORDER TO *LEAVE* HERE WITH A MINIMUM OF TROUBLE, I'M GOING TO NEED--

--A *HOSTAGE*!

RAKKK!

WELCOME

HOLD YOUR FIRE!

BUT WE CAN'T JUST LET 'IM GET AWAY--!

WE HAVEN'T GOT ANY *CHOICE.* WE START TAKIN' SHOTS AT THE VULTURE--AN' YOU CAN BET THAT *OTHER* GUY'S--

"--AS GOOD AS *DEAD.*"

PETER...?

...YOU'VE GOT TO *LISTEN* T'ME, PARKER!

IF YOU COULD JUST *TALK* TO YOUR AUNT...MAKE HER *UNDERSTAND!*

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO *TELL* HER?

THAT YOU'RE NOT REALLY THE HEARTLESS KILLER PEOPLE *THINK* YOU ARE?

THAT YOU'RE JUST A POOR, MISUNDERSTOOD OLD MAN WHO'S HAD SOME BAD *BREAKS*?

I'M NOT PRETENDING TO BE ANYTHING OTHER THAN WHAT I *AM*. AND WHAT I AM... IS VERY *DANGEROUS*.

FACT IS, IF YOU WEREN'T MAY PARKER'S *NEPHEW* I'D SNAP YOUR NECK LIKE A TWIG--AND THROW YOUR DEAD BODY OUT INTO THE *RAIN*.

AND I WOULDN'T LOSE ANY *SLEEP* OVER IT. *BELIEVE* ME. I'VE GOT *PLENTY* OF BLOOD ON MY HANDS... A LITTLE *MORE* WON'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE.

BUT YOU *ARE* HER NEPHEW. AND I'D SOONER DIE HERE AND *NOW* THAN DO *ANYTHING* ELSE TO HURT THE PEOPLE NATHAN LUBENSKY LOVED.

WHY IS IT I DON'T *BELIEVE* YOU?

NATHAN WAS MY *FRIEND*! I *CARED* ABOUT HIM! I *REALLY CARED*!

YOUR AUNT *HAS* TO KNOW THAT I NEVER... *NEVER*... WOULD'VE LAID A *HAND* ON HIM THAT DAY IF I'D REALIZED *WHO HE WAS*!

IN ANOTHER FEW MONTHS... I'M JUST GONNA BE A SACK OF FLESH AND BONES... *MOLDERING* IN A GRAVE.

BUT I CAN'T DIE WITHOUT HER FORGIVENESS!

I... I'LL LET YOU *GO*! I *SWEAR* IT!

BUT YOU'VE GOT TO MAKE HER UNDERSTAND!

THIS WHOLE TIME I'VE BEEN LETTING HIM RAMBLE...JUST WAITING FOR A CHANCE TO BREAK AWAY AND CHANGE TO *SPIDER-MAN*...

...SO I CAN TAKE HIM *DOWN.*

BUT...AFTER HEARING HIS STORY...I CAN'T HELP BUT *FEEL* FOR HIM. HE REALLY *MEANS* IT.

HE'S REALLY *SORRY* FOR WHAT HE DID.

I KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO FEEL *RESPONSIBLE* FOR THE DEATH OF SOMEONE YOU LOVE...AND I--

...*I*...

OHMYGOD!

THAT'S *GREGORY BESTMAN*--THE VULTURE'S OLD *BUSINESS PARTNER!*

BEATEN TO PULP. AND HIS NECK...*BROKEN.* WHAT WAS IT THE VULTURE SAID BEFORE? "SNAPPED LIKE A *TWIG*"?

I CAN'T BELIEVE I WAS FEELING *COMPASSION* FOR THIS MURDERING ANIMAL!

WELL--NO *MORE!*

NO MORE!

PARKER--WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE *DOING*?! YOU'RE NO MATCH FOR *ME*! YOU'RE--

WATCH *OUT*, YOU IDIOT-- *WATCH OUT!*

PARKER!!

OH, NO.

I...I *TRIED* TO STOP HIM. I DON'T UNDERSTAND...HOW DID HE GET *PAST* ME LIKE THAT. I--

GOTTA... GOTTA GET *DOWN* THERE!

THAT FALL...HE'S PROBABLY HURT... MAYBE EVEN--NO. *NO!* HE *CAN'T* BE DEAD! *HE CAN'T BE DEAD!*

DON'T WORRY--

--HE'S *NOT.*

HUH?!

SURPRISE!

YOU'RE GETTING *SLOPPY*, VULTURE--USING THE SAME OLD STATEN ISLAND HIDEOUT!

THWAM!

MAKES IT PRETTY DARN EASY FOR YOUR FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD SPIDER-MAN TO TRACK YOU *DOWN!*

I WAS OUT THERE *WAITING* FOR JUST THE RIGHT MOMENT TO COME AND *GET* YOU--BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO RISK PARKER GETTING *HURT.*

WHEN HE TOOK THAT *DIVE*, I KNEW I HAD MY CHANCE. CAUGHT THE KID AND SENT HIM ON HIS WAY. WHICH JUST LEAVES--

YOU

AND

ME.

WHAT A *WONDERFUL* STROKE OF LUCK! NOW I DON'T HAVE TO WAIT ANOTHER *MOMENT*--

--TO *KILL* YOU!

I HOPE YOU'VE GOT *FAMILY*, SPIDER-MAN--PEOPLE THAT *LOVE* YOU AND *WORRY* ABOUT YOU! 'CAUSE IT'D MAKE ME VERY HAPPY T'KNOW--

"--THAT THEY'RE *NEVER* GONNA SEE YOU *AGAIN!*"

"FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS" CONCLUDES NEXT ISSUE!